

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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USIA-15 SAM-01 CU-04 SY-10 OPR-02 DRC-01 /110 W

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R 130900Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 823

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

CINCPAC

USAI WASHDC 3822

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 1929

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJ: GOI ANNOUNCES NEWSPAPERS CLOSED PERMANENTLY

REF: JAKARTA 1011

SUMMARY: INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 12 THAT FIVE DAILIES AND THREE WEEKLIES WHOSE PUBLICATION PERMITS WERE REVOKED IN WAKE OF ANTI-TANAKA RIOTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO RESUME PUBLICATION. FATE OF ONE OTHER DAILY AND ONE WEEKLY WHICH LOST PRINTING PERMIT IS STILL BEING WEIGHED. ANNOUNCEMENT SPECIFIED THAT ALTHOUGH NEW PUBLICATIONS STILL PERMISSIBLE, THEY MUST BE STARTED BY "NEW PEOPLE," THEREBY DASHING HOPES THAT PAPERS MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO RESUME UNDER NEW NAMES. MORE-OVER STAFF MEMBERS OF BANNED PUBLICATIONS WILL NEED CONFIDENTIAL

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SPECIAL CLEARANCE FROM SECURITY AUTHORITIES BEFORE BEING

ALLOWED TO WORK FOR NEW PUBLICATIONS. ANNOUNCEMENT APPARENTLY SPELLS FORMAL FINISH TO PRESS FREEDOM, WHICH HAD FLOURISHED IN INDONESIA UNDER THE NEW ORDER UNTIL RECENTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING INITIAL MEETING OF RECENTLY ESTABLISHED CABINET-LEVEL "POLITICAL AND SECURITY STABILIZATION COUNCIL" ON FEB 12, MINISTER OF INFORMATION MASHURI ANNOUNCED THAT FIVE MAJOR JAKARTA DAILIES AND THREE WEEKLIES WHOSE PUBLICATION PERMITS WERE WITHDRAWN FOLLOWING THE ANTI-TANAKA RIOTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PUBLISH AGAIN. PAPERS IN THIS CATEGORY ARSLDAILIES "INDONESIA RAYA" (INDEPENDENT), "ABADI" (ISLAMIC-MASJUMI LINKED), "NUSANTARA" (ISLAMIC-INDEPENDENT), "HARIAN KAMI" (GENERATION OF 66 STUDENT DAILY) AND "JAKARTA TIMES" (ENGLISH-LANGUAGE INDEPENDENT) PLUS WEEKLIES "WENANG", "MAHASISWA INDONESIA" (BANDUNG) AND "PEMUDA INDONESIA." MASHURI SAID THAT THE STATUS OF PAPERS WHICH HAD LOST PRINTING PERMIT ONLY (AS OPPOSED TO PUBLISHING PERMIT) WAS STILL BEING WEIGHED IN RELATION TO THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE ANTI-TANAKA RIOTS. PAPERS IN THIS CATEGORY INCLUDE "PEDOMAN" (OLD SOCIALIST DAILY NOW PARTLY OWNED BY STATE OIL COMPANY PRESIDENT IBNU SUTOWO) AND WEEKLY MAGAZINE "EKSPRES" (CONTROLLED BY FORMER PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT ALI MURTOPO).

2. IN RESPONSE TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS, MASHURI SAID THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD STILL PERMIT NEW PUBLICATIONS. HOWEVER HE ADDED THAT NEW PAPERS WOULD HAVE TO BE STARTED BY NEW PEOPLE, NOT THE PUBLISHERS OR "SUPPORTERS" OF THOSE BANNED. STAFF MEMBERS OF LATTER WOULD ONLY BE ALLOWED TO WORK ON NEW PUBLICATIONS AFTER OBTAINING CLEARANCE (IJIN PENJERNIHAN) FROM SECURITY AUTHORITIES (KLOPKAMTIB). MASHURI NOTED THAT DECISION RE PRESS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN BEFORE POLITICAL STABILIZATION COUNCIL MEETING (HE DID NOT SPECIFY BY WHOM) AND THAT LATTER HAD MERELY "CONFIRMED" IT.

3. COMMENT:. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT APPARENTLY PUTS A FORMAL FINISH TO PRESS FREEDOM IN INDONESIA, WHICH FLOURISHED  
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FROM THE ONSET OF THE "NEW ORDER" IN 1966 UNTIL THE RECENT ANTI-TANAKA RIOTS, AND CONSTITUTED PERHAPS THE BRIGHTEST SPOT IN THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. THE IMPACT OF THESE CLOSURES ON FOREIGN OPINION WILL BE CONSIDERABLE, ESPECIALLY OF SUCH WELL-KNOWN DAILIES AS "INDONESIA RAYA", "ABADI" AND "NUSANTARA" (ALL OF WHICH WERE ALSO CLOSED DOWN AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER BY SUKARNO). THE IMPACT ON CLIMATE OF OPINION AT HOME IS LIKELY TO

BE DEVASTATING. ALREADY EDITORS OF REMAINING INDEPENDENT DAILIES (NOTABLY "SINAR HARAPAN" AND "KOMPAS", BOTH OF WHICH ARE WEALTHY, REPRESENT CHRISTIAN MINORITIES, AND HENCE ARE DOUBLY INCLINED TO BE CAUTIOUS) HAVE RETREATED INTO MEALY-MOUTHED APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES OR (WITH REGARD TO MANY SENSITIVE ISSUES) SILENCE. THE MOSLEMS NOW HAVE NO NEWSPAPER WHATEVER (ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT MAY EVENTUALLY STEP IN TO FILL THIS BREACH WITH A NEW RUBBER-STAMP ISLAMIC DAILY) AND INDEED THE ONLY MAJOR STREAM IN INDONESIAN POLITICAL LIFE STILL REPRESENTED IN THE PRESS IS THAT OF THE XENOPHOBIC NATIONALIST LEFT, WHOSE UNOFFICIAL ORGAN, "MERDEKA", IS STILL WITH US.

4. MASHURI MADE VAGUE REFERENCES TO CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLOSED PAPERS AND RIOTS, BUT HE DID NOT REFER TO SPECIFIC EDITORIALS OR NEWS COVERAGE WHICH LED TO CLOSURES, AND INDEED EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF "NUSANTARA" GOI HAS NOT YET MADE SLIGHTEST EFFORT TO T\*LL PUBLIC OR JOURNALISTS EXACTLY WHAT LATTER DID THAT WAS WRONG. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT REFERENCES TO CORRUPT ACTIVITIES ON PART OF PRESIDENT BHS WIFE PROBABLY DID MORE TO PRECIPITATE CLOSURES THAN ANYTHING ELSE, BUT THIS IS SPECULATION.

5. GOVERNMENT CAN CONSTRUCT A CASE THAT SHUTDOWNS ARE "LEGAL" UNDER 1966 GRANT OF EMERGENCY POWERS TO PRESIDENT (RENEWED IN 1973). SOME FOREIGN CRITICS MAY NOTE THAT CLOSURES VIOLATE SPIRIT OF 1945 CONSTITUTION, 1966 PRESS LAW, AND 1973 CONSULTATIVE CONGRESS (MPR) GUIDELINES, ALL OF WHICH ENDORSE FREEDOM OF PRESS. ARTICLE 8 OF 1966 PRESS LAW STATES THAT "EVERY CITIZEN HAS THE RIGHT OF PRESS PUBLICATION OF A COLLECTIVE NATURE...FOR THIS, NO PUBLICATION PERMITS ARE NECESSARY." BUT IN ANST  
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EVENT, OF COURSE, LEGAL CHALLENGE WILL NOT RPT NOT BE FORTHCOMING.

6. MASHURI'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS UNRELIEVED BY SLIGHTEST RAY OF HOPE FOR THOSE EMPLOYED ON DECEASED PAPERS. MANY HAD ASSUMED THAT, AFTER DECENT INTERVAL, OLD PAPERS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RECONSTITUTE THEMSELVES UNDER NEW NAMES, BUT LIVERNMENT HAS SPECIFICALLY QUASHED THAT SOLUTION. CREATION OF WHAT AMOUNTS TO BLACKLIST OF OFFENDING JOURNALISTS MEANS THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF INDONESIA'S WAFER-THIN INTELLIGENTSIA NOW FINDS ITSELF IN A "NON-PERSON" CATEGORY. (A FAMOUS EDITOR LIKE MOCHTAR LUBIS OF "INDONESIA RAYA" WILL STILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A LIVING, BUT FOR THE NEXT ECHELON OF JOURNALISTS PERMANENT CLOSURE WILL PSE SEVERE HARD-

SHIPS.) RESULT IS LIKELY TO BE NEAR TOTAL BITTERNESS  
AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN PRESS CORPS AND AMONG MANY SYMPA-  
THIZERS, ALL THE MORE SO GIVEN PREVIOUS PRIDE THAT UP  
TO NOW PRESS FREEDOM WAS ONE AREA --ONE OF THE FEW--  
WHERE INDONESIA COULD BOAST OF BEING AHEAD OF  
HER NEIGHBORS.

7. LIKE CONTINUED DETENTION OF INTELLECTUALS,  
GOVERNMENT'S HARD LINE ON PRESS REFLECTS DEEP PRESIDENTIAL  
ANGER THAT RIOTS GOT OUT OF CONTROL. IT IS ALSO TESTI-  
MONY TO A SENSE OF INSECURITY IN GOI, STIMULATED BY  
RECENT HIGH-LEVEL DISSENSION WHICH MAY NOT YET BE OVER.  
IN INDONESIA AS ELSEWHERE TOLERANCE IS DIRECTLY  
PROPORTIONAL TO  
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## Message Attributes

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